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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0012
INFO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1202
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0276
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3849
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1686
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8694
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6928
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4990
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3060
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 4949
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4055
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 9317
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 6623
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 1156
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3540
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDRUSARPAC FT SHAFTER HI//APCW/APOP//
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J3/J332/J52//
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA (BOUCHER), SCA/INS AND PRM
STATE ALSO PASS USAID
AID/W FOR ANE/SCA, DCHA/FFP (DWORKEN, KSHEIN)
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA (MORRISP, ACONVERY, RTHAYER, RKERR)
ATHENS FOR PCARTER
BANGKOK FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA (WBERGER)
KATHMANDU FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA AND POL (SBERRY)
GENEVA FOR RMA (NKYLOH, NHILGERT, MPITOTTI)
USUN NEW YORK FOR ECOSOC (D MERCADO)
SECDEF FOR OSD - POLICY
PACOM ALSO FOR J-5

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREF](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CE](#) [ECON](#)
SUBJECT: Northern Sri Lanka SitRep 77

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Colombo 529 F) Colombo 522 G) Colombo 519 H) Colombo 514 I) Colombo
507 and previous

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: President Rajapaksa declared May 20 a national holiday to celebrate the victory over the Tamil Tigers (LTTE). In Ambassador's farewell call on him, the President acknowledged the importance of reconciliation with Sri Lankan Tamils and with the Tamil Diaspora to ensure that Tamils would not support a comeback by the LTTE. The President said his initial thoughts on power-sharing arrangements with the Tamil minority included implementation of existing constitutional provisions on provincial council, plus the creation of a new upper house of the Sri Lankan Parliament to represent the provinces' interests. Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa was highly critical of recent UN and ICRC actions, and said the ICRC was no longer needed in the former conflict zone, even to identify bodies. He said international organizations should include more nationals of the region so situations such as Sri Lanka's fight against the LTTE would be better understood. India reportedly requested forensic evidence of LTTE leader Prabhakaran's death to close out court proceedings on Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. UN Envoy Nambiar's overflight of the former conflict zone was cancelled for the second day because of bad weather. The UN and aid organizations continued to have access problems to the

IDP camps in Vavuniya because of new restrictions on vehicles. Approximately 40,000 IDPs are expected to arrive in the camps in the next two days; preparations are lagging as a result of restrictions.
END SUMMARY.

AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALL ON PRESIDENT

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador noted that his time in Colombo had coincided almost exactly with the fourth and final phase of the Sri Lankan conflict, from mid-2006 until the war ended on May 18. The President's government had managed to do what no government had done before: wrest all the territory of the country from the Tamil Tigers. Ambassador stressed that the reconciliation phase must begin now, with two vital components: the humanitarian side, providing the IDPs with what they need, and the political side - power-sharing arrangements to help Tamils have a future with hope and dignity. This was the way to defeat terrorism for good.

¶3. (SBU) The President responded that those were his intentions, but that there "certain people in the international community," abetted by "some in the South" (i.e., the opposition) who would try to undercut him. The Ambassador encouraged the GSL to think about how to engage with Tamil representatives. Ambassador said it was particularly important to reach out to the Tamil Diaspora so they would stop supporting the LTTE. He inquired about the government's plans for a political solution. The President said the basis of the plan would be the "13th amendment plus 1" - meaning implementation of the existing constitutional provisions for provincial councils, but adding an upper house to Parliament, modeled on the U.S. Senate, with numerically equal representation for each province.

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DEFENSE SECRETARY CRITICAL OF UN/ICRC

¶4. (SBU) Defense Secretary Gothabaya Rajapaksa was sharply critical of international organizations in his final meeting with Ambassador. Rajapaksa said the ICRC's job was essentially finished now that the conflict was over. He said the GSL is unhappy with the UN and ICRC for being critical of the GSL when they should have been working with the government to help resolve the conflict and address the challenges Sri Lanka faced. The Defense Secretary said the GSL doesn't want the ICRC and UN involved in identification of those killed in the former conflict zone because of their "negative" attitude. He claimed their reporting would likely inflame passions, exacerbate divisions, and be contrary to the goals of reconciliation and closure. Ambassador strongly disagreed, saying the ICRC was performing excellent work in assisting GSL efforts to deal with the humanitarian crisis.

¶5. (SBU) Gothabaya insisted the ICRC and UN were not helping. He acknowledged some GSL shortcomings, but said international actors should understand the complexities of the conflict and work with the GSL and the military, rather than be antagonistic toward the government. The Defense Secretary said international organizations should include more Asians, such as Thais, Malaysians, and Japanese. They would then be better able to establish rapport and understanding with their GSL and military counterparts. Ambassador replied that the USG could not and would not dictate to international organizations the composition of their teams. Ambassador said that the GSL should strive to improve its cooperation with the ICRC and the UN. By demonstrating greater openness, the GSL could counter and minimize allegations that it has something to hide.

¶6. (SBU) The Defense Secretary did not directly respond to Ambassador's question about problems the UN and NGOs were having with new rules on vehicle access to the IDP camps. Instead, he highlighted rifts between INGOs and Sri Lankan NGOs, saying that the NGOs complained they should have greater access to funding, since they have the local expertise to respond to the situation.

"TAMIL DOCTORS" HELD FOR QUESTIONING

17. (SBU) Ambassador argued strongly for ICRC access to the Tamil government doctors who were previously working inside the conflict zone, who have since been detained. The Defense Secretary said that the government just wanted to question them. He said it would be best if the Criminal Investigation Division of the police keeps them for the time being, as they would likely face a security risk from "reactionary groups" if released now when passions are high. The police would then release them later when it was safer for them. Ambassador emphasized that the doctors were likely under a great deal of pressure by the LTTE to report the way they did, and noted that they may have been coerced. Ambassador pointed out that the doctors had endured great hardship, that their heroic efforts had likely saved countless lives, and stressed that their release

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would be a magnanimous gesture by the GSL that would be recognized by the international community.

AMBASSADOR TIES BETTER MIL-TO-MIL
RELATIONS TO HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENT

18. (SBU) Ambassador told the Defense Secretary that progress on child soldiers and human rights would lay the basis for normalized military-to-military relations. He strongly hoped that extra-judicial killings and abductions would stop and that the media would be free from intimidation. Ambassador noted that UNICEF statistics showed there were still at least 34 child soldiers in the Eastern Province. The Defense Secretary said he had issued orders to arrest those holding child soldiers. He noted that so far three individuals had been arrested for doing so, and a case against them was pending. He added that he had issued orders for the disarmament of all armed groups, including the TMVP. The Defense Secretary said that security was now provided by the police for all officials in the region. He recognized that armed militias were a problem, and over the last few months he had been moving step-by-step to resolve it. He said with the end of the armed conflict, he now considered this to be his major task.

INDIA SEEKING PRABHAKARAN EVIDENCE

19. (SBU) Media reports from India stated that the Indian Government would seek forensic evidence of the reported deaths of both LTTE leader Prabhakaran and Pottu Amman, his intelligence chief, in order to close their file on the investigation and prosecution of those involved in the 1991 assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. In 1995 India formally requested extradition of Prabhakaran and Pottu Amman from Sri Lanka, if ever they were captured.

UN, ICRC VISIT TO SAFE ZONE CANCELLED AGAIN
DUE TO POOR WEATHER

110. (SBU) UN Resident Representative Neil Buhne confirmed to DCM May 20 that for the second day in a row the UN/ICRC helicopter overflight of the former safe zone and visit to transit sites in Vavuniya was cancelled due to poor weather. Their military helicopter took off at 1100 but was forced to turn back due to heavy winds and low clouds. They will try again May 21 to have the UN Secretary General's Chief of Staff Vijay Nambiar overfly the former safe zone. The back-up plan is to either take a fixed wing aircraft to both places (an overflight of the safe zone by plane would be less useful, however, and would preclude touching down), or to travel by road to Vavuniya. The UN is also developing contingency plans for Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's travel on May 23 in case the poor weather continues.

ACCESS TO CAMPS PROBLEMATIC;
UN PROTESTING NO-VEHICLES RULE

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¶11. (SBU) Access to the IDP camps became an increasing problem due to new restrictions imposed by the GSL. While food and water are still getting in, as they are under the direct control of GSL at that point, all aid workers including UN personnel are being told they must walk into the camps. This rule severely limits the ability to oversee aid distribution and to get non-food aid in to the most recent IDPs, some of whom have literally only the clothes on their backs. Further to this rule change, International Organization for Migration (IOM) staff attempted to walk into Zones 1 and 2 at Manik Farm site on May 20 and were turned back by GSL personnel.

¶12. USAID/OFDA Regional Advisor reports no relief organization has been able to enter Zones 1, 2 or 3 since May 17. There are now 35,000 IDPs in Zone 4 of Manik Farm. Only a few organizations are working there: UNICEF, IOM and CARE. 16,000 persons are being processed at the former crossing point in Omanthai, and 25,000 will be processed tomorrow. Preparations are not in place for them. For example, there are no latrines prepared in Zone 4. UN agencies and others remained in discussions with GSL to try to resolve the access problems before UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon arrives the evening of May 22.

¶13. (SBU) NGOs and INGOs reported no access was allowed to IDP camps in the Jaffna area, in spite of an order from the GSL Security Forces Commander granting them such access.

HEALTH PROBLEMS INCREASING IN CAMPS

¶14. (SBU) The World Health Organization has reported a resumption of disease monitoring in the camps, with more than 3,000 reported cases of severe diarrhea and 1,000 cases of hepatitis at the Manik Farm site camps.

BLAKE